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“He spread his chicken wings just
as he had seen birds do.”

MORE
TUCK-ME-IN
STORIES



Written and Illustrated

by *enjamin*

ENOS B. COMSTOCK

MOFFAT, YARD and COMPANY

NEW YORK

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Published December, 1922

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

DEC - 6 '22 ✓
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TO
SALLY McCORMICK



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A TRIP TO THE MOON

A YOUNG BEAR and a little squirrel whose homes happened to be in the same old forest tree, got to playing with each other and became very dear friends. The bear was a fairly good climber; but of course the squirrel was able to get to a great many places that the bear could not. He could scamper to the very tip of the tallest tree and he was rather proud to think that, although he was so much smaller than the bear, he could outdo him in many ways; and it perhaps did not occur to him that, on the other hand, the bear was able to do a few things that a squirrel could not.

One day the bear climbed way up into the top of a tall sapling. I wonder if you know what a sapling is. It is a very young tree, and this particular one was only a little bigger around than your arm. The tree did not break; but the weight of the bear was so great that it bent way over until its top nearly touched the ground and by bouncing up and down a little so as to make it

spring, the bear was able to have a gay ride. Of course that looked like great sport to Master Squirrel, so he scampered up another little tree and tried to bend it over; but his tiny weight made no impression and he was very much provoked.

“If I could once get it to bend,” said he, “I know I could spring just as you do.”

“Perhaps,” said Master Bear. “I’ll tell you what we will do. I will climb up and bend the tree over for you and then I will go back to my own tree.”



So he climbed up to the top and sure enough, just as they had thought, the tree bent over very nicely and Master Squirrel perched himself comfortably where he could bob up and down.

When he was all ready he told the little bear to let go and return to his own tree; but what do you suppose happened the very second the bear released his hold? There was a sharp, swishing sound and a rustle of branches, and the top of the tree shot up into the air so very unexpectedly that I fear the young squirrel never will know just what did happen. Of course the tree stopped moving when it got straightened out, but the little squirrel did not. Up and up he went — higher and higher — and when I wrote this story he was still going — up and up and up in the direction of the moon.

LITTLE JOE GOSLING

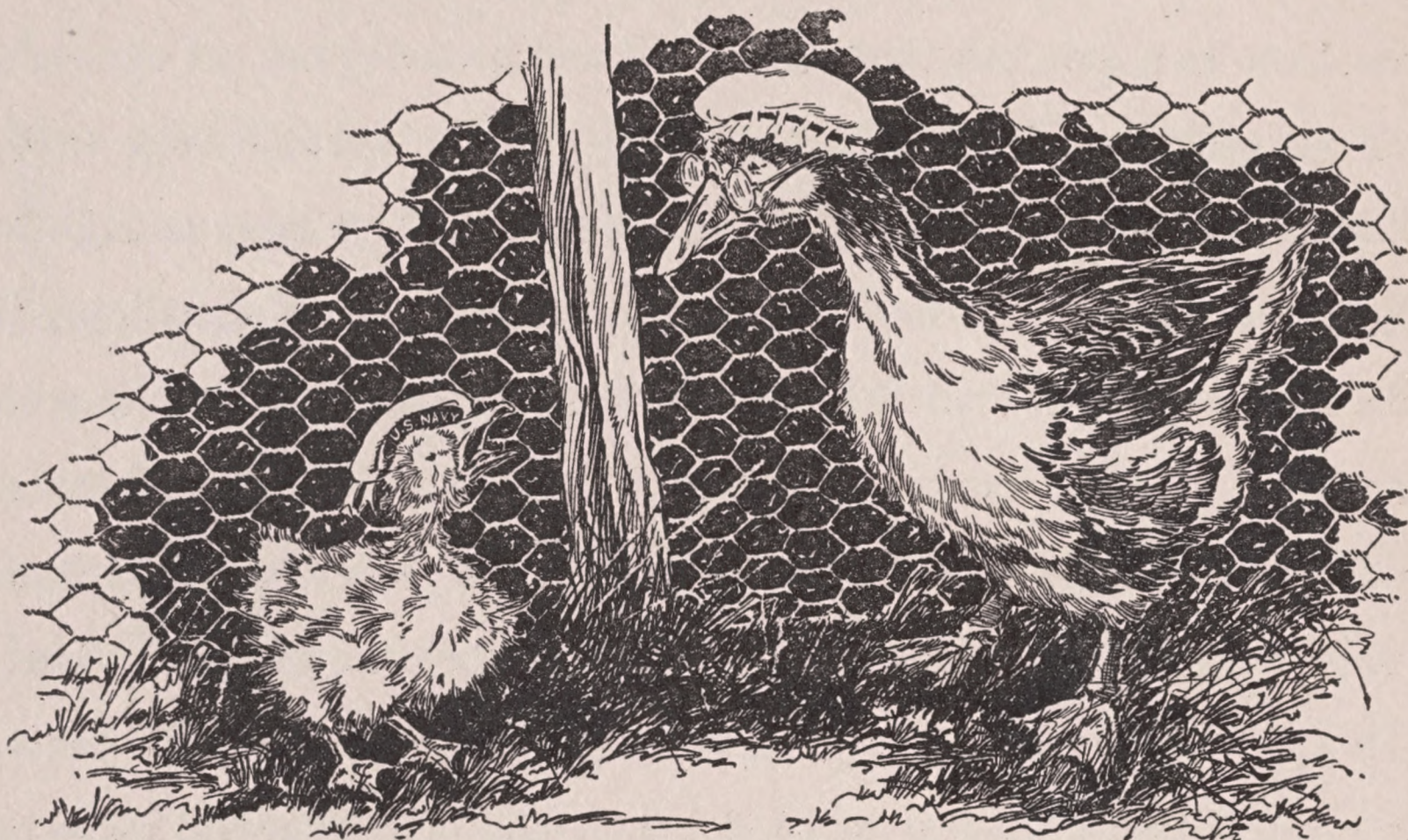
LITTLE JOE GOSLING was the baby of a family of ten young geese and everyone seemed to agree that he was very bright for his age. But one day he made a stupid blunder and it is hard to live a thing of that kind down; so now when folks see him, as like as not they turn their heads away to hide their smiles and say, "There goes that silly little Gosling boy, have you heard about the stupid thing he did the other day?"

You have not heard, I am sure, so I will tell you. Because he was her youngest son, and because she was so very proud of him, Mrs. Gosling seldom allowed him out of her sight; but one day he stole away when she wasn't looking and went for a long walk across the fields. "What a pleasure this is," he said to himself, "not to be watched every minute or to be told that I must not go here or there. What a lovely time I am having." So he walked on and on. He did not see that the sun was getting low and never once thought of turning back.

At length he came to a fence. It was made of woven wire and the mesh was so fine that he could not wiggle through it. "Very well, if I cannot get through, I will go around," thought he. So he walked along close to the fence looking for it to end. He walked and he walked but there seemed to be no end. At length he came to a gate but that was closed and he could not get through, so he walked and walked some more until he became very tired, but still he found no end to the fence and no place large enough to get through. Finally he came again to a gate and on examining it he was startled to find that it was the same gate that he had seen before. Then a terror seized him. "I have been walking around in a circle," said he. "I am fenced in. I must have got into some sort of a trap. Oh dear! What will become of me?" Then he thought of pictures he had seen of foxes catching little geese, and he felt sure that he had fallen into one of their awful traps so he began to cry.

His poor little webbed feet were very tired but he kept on walking and walking. Three more times he passed the same gate and then he felt that there could be no doubt about his being a prisoner. Night was coming on and he was too tired to walk any further so he just sat down and sobbed aloud. It seemed to him as though he had been there for hours, and it had grown quite

dark when suddenly he heard a sound close to him. His heart almost stopped beating for he felt sure that it was a fox come to take him. But what was his joy a moment later to see his own dear mother. "Oh! my poor child," she cried. "I have been looking everywhere for you."



"Mother, mother," sobbed the poor little gosling, "help me out of this dreadful prison. I have walked around and around, oh so many times and I can find no way out."

Then his mother understood. "Why, you silly little goose," she said, "you have been walking around on the outside of the garden fence. You are not fenced in any more than I am. What a very, very stupid mistake, to be sure."

Little Joe was too tired to walk another step so he climbed up on to his mother's back and nestled down, and in what seemed to him a very short time they were back home again; and just in time too, as the little girl who took care of the geese was locking up the poultry house for the night.

THE DOG THAT TRIED TO GO TWO WAYS AT ONCE

TWO little bunnies were out walking one snowy winter day when they discovered that they were being pursued by a dog. As you know, the very worst thing that can happen to a bunny is to meet with this misfortune, because it is so apt to mean that the dog may catch him. They bounded away as fast as their little legs could carry them but, try as they would, they could tell by the barking of the dog that he was gaining on them at every bound.

“If we keep on in this way,” said one of the bunnies, “we will both be caught. He is sure to overtake us. I think it would be better to separate and then at least one of us will be able to escape.”

The little bunnies were very dear friends and it almost broke their hearts to leave each other, but there was no time to waste in sentiment so they said goodbye and parted.

Now it happened that the dog was a large and a very greedy



“The dog was gaining on them at every bound.”

dog but he was not a hunting dog. He bounded swiftly along, perfectly sure that he would be able to overtake the rabbits in a short time. I think too, that his mind, a good part of the time, was centered on the feast he was to have. "Just think what a treat it will be to have two rabbits for one dinner," he said to himself; and the thought made him smack his lips.



Suddenly and quite unexpectedly he came to the place where the bunnies had parted company and he stopped abruptly. "Now what is to be done?" said he. "I cannot go both ways, and if I follow one rabbit it will give the other a chance to escape. I want both of them." He was very miserable. He sat and thought for some time. "Well, I must decide," he said finally, "I am losing time." So he started to follow the tracks that led off to the right. But he was very undecided. "If I am to have only one," he said, "at least I will have the larger; but how am I to tell that? I

know; I am a very clever dog. I will go back to the place where they separated and examine the tracks. Then I can tell which it is." So he turned around and trotted back and carefully studied the footprints. "It is well that I did this," he said, "for it is plain to see that the rabbit that went to the left, is much the larger." This settled, he started off in that direction.

And what do you suppose the bunnies were doing while the greedy dog was trying to make up his mind which way to go, and which was the larger of the two? Running? Of course they were; just as hard as they could run. And by the time the dog had decided which one he wanted, they were both so very far away that he never caught either of them. And you may guess how very happy they were to find each other; which they did in good time.

THE LITTLEST CROW AND THE BIGGEST HEART

THERE used to be a crow's nest high up among the branches of an old oak tree, and there were three baby crows in the nest. The mother crow was very proud of them and she spent most of her time bringing them things to eat — corn, acorns, bugs, table scraps that had been thrown out, and in fact it would be quite impossible to name all of the things that appeal to the taste of young crows. The two older children were very greedy and whenever their mother came to the nest with some morsel of food they would crane their necks and open their beaks so wide that one or the other of them was sure to be favored with it; while the third baby crow got so very little to eat that the wonder was that he did not starve to death. Of course the two greedy ones grew very fast and were soon large enough to leave the nest. Their mother looked upon them with favor and took delight in showing them to all the neighbor birds and telling what fine children they were and how they were sure to be a credit

to her when they flew out into the world. But I am sorry to say she was a little inclined to be ashamed of her poor puny little baby and she hardly cared to have it known that he was one of her children.

One day, just before the young crows were about to leave the nest, the mother crow said to them, "My dears, you are about to leave me and go out into the great world. I wish each of you might bring me some little remembrance to show your appreciation of all that I have done for you."



The next morning the three young crows said goodbye to their mother and flew away. About noon the largest returned to her nest carrying a clamshell in his beak. "See, mother," said he,

“I have brought you this beautiful shell. It will keep forever and it will always be a reminder to you of your finest son.”

“And what became of the clam that was inside of the shell?” asked Mother Crow.

“Oh,” said the son, “I ate the clam.”

Mrs. Crow made no reply.

About the middle of the afternoon the second son returned carrying some corn silk which he laid carefully beside his mother. “See, mother,” said he, “isn’t it beautiful! And what a lovely lining it will make for your nest.”

“Now that my babies have gone I have no further need of my nest,” said the mother crow; “but may I ask what became of the ear of corn from which you took the silk?”

“Oh,” said the second son, “I ate the corn.”

And again the mother was silent.

It was late in the afternoon when the third little son returned. He was very tired and it was with difficulty that he alighted on the bough close to his mother’s nest. He carried a morsel of meat in his beak and laid it at her feet. “See, mother,” said he, “it was the nicest thing I could find.”

“But, my child, didn’t it tempt your own appetite?” said the mother. I should think you would have liked it yourself.”

“Indeed I would,” said the little crow. “I got enough of its flavor as I carried it home to be sure that it would be most delicious and that was the very thing that made me wish to give it to you. You have been so unselfish and have brought us so many good things to eat, and I am sure you would have enjoyed eating many of them yourself. I was only too happy to be able to do this one little thing for you.”

Tears came to old Mrs. Crow’s eyes as she thought of how she had scorned her feeble baby because he did not make so fine an appearance as the other two. She tried to speak but her voice was choked.

“My dear baby,” she said when she finally recovered her voice, “I am very proud of you. It is my wish that you eat the delicacy you so generously brought to me.”

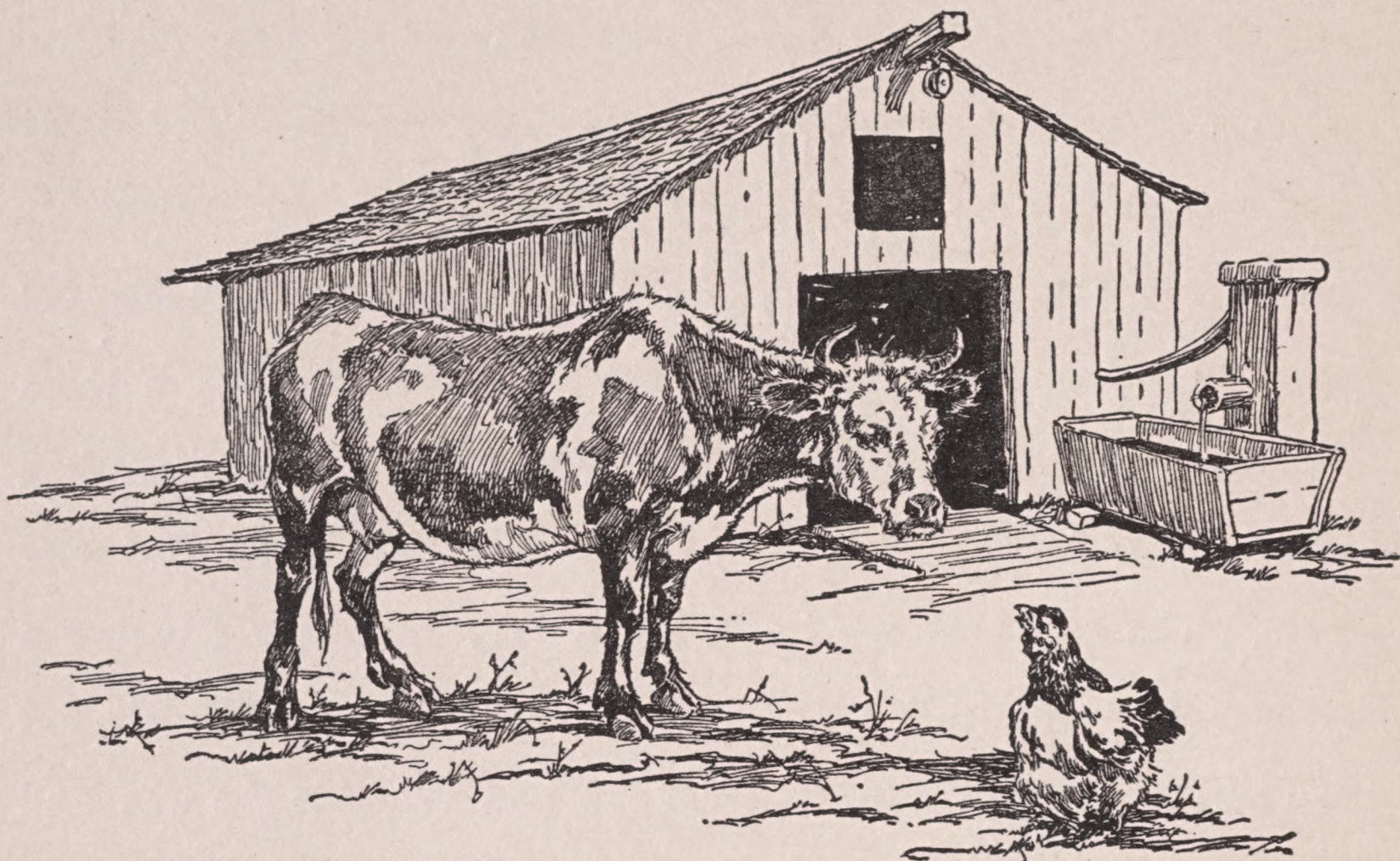
Then she turned to her two larger children and said, “I am greatly disappointed in both of you. I have done much for you and you have shown no appreciation. It meant no sacrifice to you to bring me an empty clamshell after you had eaten the clam; nor to you to carry the corn silk home after having eaten the corn. I am ashamed of both of you, but I am proud to think that I have one baby who understands the virtue of self-sacrifice.”

TRUE WORTH

ONE day an old hen was wandering about the barnyard when she chanced to meet a cow. As neither of them was very busy they stopped to visit; and, as they had nothing more important to say, they began to talk about themselves. The cow told the hen what a very necessary creature a cow is and how difficult it would be for people to get along without her; and the hen, in turn, told the cow how valuable she was and how dependent people were on her.

They talked and talked, and finally began a real argument as to which of them was more necessary to mankind. Of course there were lots of very good arguments on both sides. We would find it quite hard to get along without milk, and I think it would be equally difficult to do without eggs. The argument grew more and more heated and some of the remarks were quite personal. The cow told Mrs. Hen that, if there were no chickens, and she sometimes wished there weren't, people could get along very nicely with

ducks' eggs. To this Mrs. Hen replied that she could not understand why anybody kept cows at all; that, to her mind, goats were just as useful and far more agreeable.




At this unpleasant stage of the argument a little honeybee happened along on his way to the hive. He noticed that the cow and the hen were very much excited and paused just a moment to learn the cause.

“This is perfectly silly,” said the cow, “to think that a creature the size of that hen should feel that she is as much needed as I am. I leave it to you, Master Bee, to settle the argument.”

“Well,” said the little bee, “I am busy and have very little

time to settle arguments; but, since you have invited it, I will spare just a moment to give you a little advice. You are arguing a very foolish question and I would not pretend to decide it. We are all put here for a purpose, and it matters not whether we are as large as a cow or as small as a hen or," and he looked very serious, "as tiny as a honeybee. We need not argue as to which of us is most necessary. The thing that should concern us is how well we perform the duty that we were put here to fulfill. Give your milk, Mrs. Cow; and you, Mrs. Hen, continue to lay eggs; and I will busy myself and be content to gather honey."

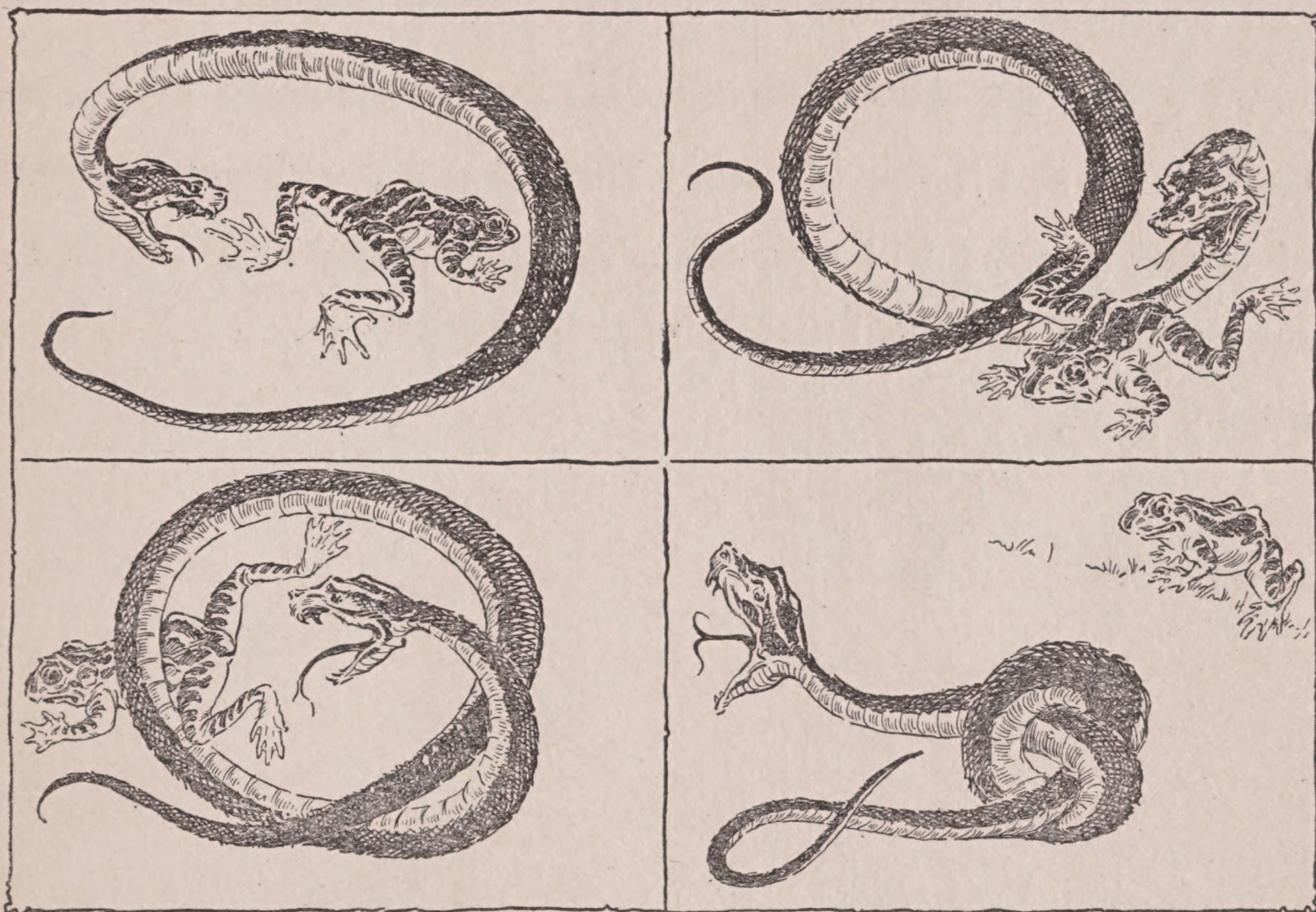
SAVED BY HIS WITS

 ONE fine spring day not so very long ago, a little frog was hopping along in a field when he had the misfortune to meet a large snake. It is not a pleasant thing to meet a snake, especially if one happens to be a frog; for snakes are very fond of frogs and surely it would be a most unhappy experience to be devoured by a snake. At first the little frog was so frightened that he was scarcely able to move, and then the thought came to him that if he was to save himself he would have to think and act quickly.

Then he recalled something that his grandfather had told him when he was little more than a tadpole. "If you should ever chance to meet a snake," his grandfather had said, "take a long jump in the opposite direction from the way the snake is facing. This will cause the snake to turn his head and the upper part of his body in order to follow you. Then take another hop back again and somewhat to the left. In turning to follow you again,

the upper part of the snake's body will form a loop. The next move seems like a very reckless thing to do, but you must do it if your little plan is to succeed. Turn about and jump right through the center of this loop."

The little frog felt that his only chance of escape depended on



his doing just as his grandfather had said. So he kept his wits and jumped in the direction he had been told to; and sure enough the snake curved his long neck and body to follow Master Frog. Then, without pausing a moment, the little frog leaped back again and to the left; and again the snake followed him, forming a large loop

of the entire fore part of his body. Then, calling on all the courage he could muster, Master Froggie turned about and jumped straight through the center of the loop. Without thinking what would happen, the ugly snake opened his big jaws to catch the little frog and shot his head through the loop he had made of himself, and I wonder if you know what did happen.

I have made some little drawings to make it easier for you to understand, and if you will study them it will save me the trouble of telling you. I will say, though, that by the time the snake succeeded in untying himself, Master Frog was quite safe in a nearby pond.

THE COMING OF DAWN

HAVE you ever been in a camp in the heart of a dense woods? If you have, and if you happened to be awake just at the first peep of dawn perhaps you have heard the chorus of hundreds of birds, for that is the time they choose for their big concert of the day.



This is a story about a young jay and a very silly remark that he made. The note of the jay is not really song, but just a single long cry; and as this little jay was just learning to sing, his note was little more than a squawk.

One day he had planned a long trip and wished to rise very early in the morning; so he awoke about an hour before daylight and began his unpleasant cry. He kept it up for a long time, and finally succeeded in waking all the birds in that part of the forest. Of course they did not like the idea of being aroused long before it was time to get up, and some of them were quite angry. An old crow who was naturally a late sleeper, and very much out of patience at being awakened, spoke to him and asked what he meant by disturbing them.

“Why,” said the foolish little jay, “I thought we sang to bring the dawn. The daylight always comes when we begin to sing, and I wanted it to be light so that I wouldn’t have to travel in the dark.”

At this the birds laughed and jeered and began to make all manner of fun of him, and he felt very much embarrassed.

But a lovely little thrush who had a sweet song and a tender heart flew to him and said, “Child, that was not such a silly mistake to have made. The dawn does come about the time we begin our morning songs, but it is not our singing that brings the day. The coming of dawn is part of the greater plan. It is the first peep of daylight that wakens us and we sing to welcome it and because it makes us happy; but our singing does not bring the day.”

THE SAFER WAY

A MOTHER MOUSE and her son once lived in a hole back of the icebox in a fine old-fashioned kitchen. It was a very comfortable place to live, and the young mouse grew up in luxury and idleness. They were quite safe in their hole and the pantry was well stocked with all sorts of good things to eat. To be sure there was an old housecat who would gladly have made a meal of either of them had she known that they were such near neighbors. But she was well fed and spent a great deal of her time asleep on the rug in front of the fire.

Like many another mother, Mrs. Mouse did altogether too much for her son. She never allowed him to go more than a few steps beyond the door of their home for fear some accident might befall him. If there was food to be got, she was the one to get it, for, "How terrible it would be," she would say, "if anything were to happen to my child." The result was that he grew up to be a great big mouse without the least idea how to take care of himself.

One day the mother mouse became quite ill and was unable to go out as usual to get their supper. Her son was very much at a loss to know what to do, but finally he became so hungry that he decided he had better go in search of something to eat. Mrs. Mouse was very much worried, and charged him to be very careful and to make sure that the old cat was fast asleep before venturing into the kitchen.

“Have no fear for me,” said the helpless young mouse. “I know how to take care of myself.”




Now I don't know as he was altogether to blame for the stupid thing he did; for, as I said, his mother had never taught him to take care of himself, much less to look after her; but what do you suppose he did? He saw old Mrs. Tabby-cat stretched out on the rug before the fire, but to save his life he could not make out

whether she was asleep or just nodding. "I have seen mother spend half an hour or more creeping about and trying to make sure whether Mrs. Cat was asleep or not, and it always seemed to me like a dreadful waste of time," he said. "I know a way that is a great deal more certain and will not take nearly so long." So he walked up quite close to Mrs. Cat and said, "Mrs. Cat, are you asleep?" Mrs. Cat was asleep, but of course she did not stay asleep very long after that. She awoke with a jump and made one spring at Master Mouse.

Now I will say this much for him — he may have been stupid but he was very active; and to that fact he owes his life. He darted under the icebox and into the hole so quickly that old Tabby was not certain afterward whether it had really happened or whether it was all a strange dream.

When his mother was well enough to stand the shock he told her of the narrow escape he had had; and ever after he was quite certain that her way was best, even though it did take a little longer.

HOW THE TOAD GOT HIS HUMPS

 ONCE upon a time a snail and a toad were walking along a road together. They were not really walking, of course, for they don't either of them do that. The toad hops and the snail creeps. This made it rather difficult for them to keep in step. The toad would take a short hop and then wait for the snail to catch up with him, and then he would take another hop. You can see that this was not the most pleasing way for folks to travel together, and it irritated the toad greatly; so he began to find fault with the snail's way of traveling.

“What a miserable way to have to go about,” he said, “with that great, rolled-up shell on your back. If I were burdened with that I would put it to some use. If I had to carry it up every hill with me I would at least have the common sense to draw myself into it and roll down, instead of creeping both ways.” As they talked, they had been climbing a long steep grade and had now got to the top. “See here,” said the toad, “I am tired of

lagging, to keep pace with you. Why don't you crawl into your shell and roll down this hill?"

"That isn't a bad idea," said the snail, "but I should not like to leave you so far behind. Suppose we both roll down."

"But, stupid thing," said the toad, "how am I to roll when I have no shell?"

"Oh! that's very simple," said the snail pointing to an old tin can that happened to be lying beside the road. "You just hop into that can and I will start you."



"Fine!" said the toad; and it was the first pleasant word he had spoken in half a mile. "I wouldn't have given you credit for having such a bright idea."

So without another word the lazy old toad hopped into the can and the snail gave him a shove. The can started to roll, slowly at first, then faster and faster until it fairly whirled. Over and over went the poor toad; bumpety bump, bumpety bump, over stones and humps.

“Help! help!” cried Mr. Toad, “I am being shaken all to pieces.”

But of course there was no help for him. On and on went the can until finally it struck a large stone at the bottom of the hill and came to a stop. Limp and bruised, poor Mr. Toad dragged himself out of the can and waited for his friend to overtake him. Master Snail did not try to roll down the hill. He snickered to himself as he watched his companion in his wild ride.

“I think he knows now why I don’t roll down the hills,” he said as he crept slowly along to where his poor friend sat waiting. The old fellow was too weak and battered to find any fault. He hopped very slowly and painfully, and Mr. Snail had no difficulty keeping pace with him after that.

Mr. Toad was a long time getting over his bumps and bruises. In fact I have heard that his bumps never did disappear, and that to this day his children and grandchildren still carry them.

LITTLE NERO

BOW-WOW-WOW!" It was a tiny piping bark that could not possibly have frightened anybody, and old Tabby who happened to be the one that was barked at this particular time, did not even so much as turn her head to show surprise.



Instead she straightened her tail higher and stiffened her walk a little as much as to say, "If that was a dog barking I did not even so much as hear him." Now, if there is one thing that makes a dog feel worse than another, it is to bark and not be noticed.

Nero was a fuzzy little Newfoundland puppy, so soft and shaggy that he looked as much like your Teddy bear as anything I can think of, but he did not know what a cute little object he was and felt very important and grown-up.

“Bow-wow-wow!” he said again, and then, when no attention was paid to him he felt very much put out and walked back to his basket to think. “I wonder what the trouble is,” said he. “I have always heard that dogs are brave and fearless and yet I cannot so much as frighten the old cat.” Nero was full of life and mischief and it was his one great wish to have everyone fear and stand in awe of him. “I will startle someone,” he said to himself, “and I will bark at Mrs. Cat until I frighten her.” So every time old Tabby came near he would spring out and bark just as loudly as he could. Had she been in a different humor Tabby might have taken time to scratch his foolish little nose, but she didn’t. She had had children of her own and she understood them. So she just smiled pleasantly and went about her business.

As time went by, however, Tabby became tired of being barked at by the foolish little puppy, so one day after he had barked himself hoarse she said to him, “Nero, do you want me to tell you why you bark at people? It is because you are very anxious to startle them and impress them with your importance. Now I

am going to give you some advice. Everyone here knows that you are nothing but a silly little puppy. We have seen you and watched you grow ever since you were old enough to toddle. We all like you because you are so cunning, but you cannot expect to startle any of us. If you wish to do that you must go away where folks know nothing of your puppyhood." With this old Tabby smiled kindly at him and walked away.

Little Nero was very much put out. "But I do not want to go away," he said to himself. "I am very happy here. Only I do want to make an impression on someone." He spent a good deal of time thinking about it and the more he thought the more he became convinced that old Tabby was right. So finally, much as he dreaded to leave his pleasant home, he decided that that was the thing he would have to do if he wished to appear to be anything other than a cunning little dog. So he went.

Many months passed and Tabby had begun to wonder if she would ever see little Nero again. She was sad, too, in a way, for she missed his silly little pranks and his important manner. One day she was dozing on her favorite door-mat enjoying the sun when suddenly she was startled almost out of her wits to find herself facing a huge dog who seemed to have come suddenly from nowhere and stood not more than three feet in front of her. She

was almost too frightened to spring for safety, but before she could move he spoke in the gentlest voice possible. "Dear Tabby," he said, "do not be frightened. Don't you remember me? I am little Nero." Tabby's fright changed to surprise and joy, but she was still a little bit uneasy. He looked so very big and fierce. "I have traveled far and seen a great deal," said Nero. "I have frightened many cats and I have whipped a great many dogs; and I am very glad to be home again."

"You scared me almost to death," said poor Tabby.

A sad, sad look came into Nero's face. "I am sorry I frightened you," he said.

"But," said Tabby, "I thought that was the very thing you went away to learn how to do."

"It was," said Nero shaking his great head, "but I have seen a great deal of the world and I am no longer the silly little puppy I once was. It makes me sad to have all my fellow creatures fear me. I want friends who can trust me and who are not afraid of me and sometimes I wish, oh, how I wish I could be a little puppy again — the cute, little puppy whom everyone loved and nobody feared."

"What a queer, queer world this is," said old Tabby. "But," she added wisely, "I shall be very glad to be your friend."

A TRIP TO NOWHERE

ONE day a little bunny was hopping along through the woods when he came to the edge of a brook. "Now what am I to do?" thought he. "I cannot hop across this stream." This made him quite unhappy so he sat down on the bank to think.

"Well," said he at length, "I have great patience; surely the brook cannot flow on forever; I will stay here until it passes by." But the brook did not pass by. Day after day the water came, and day after day the bunny waited. At length he came to realize that the stream would never pass. So he put his wits to work on another plan.

"I know," said he finally. "This brook must certainly end somewhere. I will go to the place where it ends and there I will be able to get to the opposite side." So he hopped a long way in the direction the stream flowed and after many days came to the end of the brook. But the brook flowed into a great river and there was no possible chance of crossing that.

“Well! Well!” said Master Bunny, “this is discouraging; but there is another thing I can do, and I will not be content until I have done it. I will travel to the place where the brook begins.” So he started off and hopped and hopped — day after day — day after day. He had traveled many miles and was very weary, so he sat down to rest.



While he was sitting there a tiny chipmunk crept out from his home among the rocks and greeted him. “Where are you going?” said he.

“Oh,” said Master Bunny, “I am very blue and discouraged. I am trying to get across this stream and I have done everything I can think of but there seems to be no way. Oh dear! What shall I do?”

The chipmunk scratched his little forehead with his paw for a moment and then asked, "Why do you wish to get across the brook?"

A strange expression flashed across Master Bunny's face as he replied, "Why, I don't really know. To tell the truth I hadn't thought of that. I was just hopping along when this brook came flowing by, directly across my path, and it seemed to me that, in order to continue on my way, I would have to cross the brook."

"That is quite true," said the little chipmunk, "but if I were you, and had no better reason than that, I think I would be content to stay on this side."

THE LONELY LITTLE ROSE

A BEAUTIFUL wild rose once bloomed on the sunny side of an old stone wall. It was a very lonely spot. There were no little boys or girls to come by that way and find it and say, "Oh, see the lovely rose! How sweet it is."

"I am lonely," said the rose. "No one will ever know that I have lived. Here I have lived and here I shall fade. What is the use of being fair and sweet when it gives happiness to no one?"

A rude squirrel, scampering along the wall, brushed the rose aside and went on his way without so much as pausing to say, "Oh, I am sorry, I did not mean to jostle you." The gentle June breeze came and kissed the rose, took some of its sweetness and passed on.

"Tomorrow I shall fade," said the lovely rose, "and my useless life will be ended."

As she spoke she heard a soft purring sound. Nearer and nearer it came. It was the buzz of a busy honeybee. Straight

to the lonely rose he flew. "May I take some of your sweetness with me?" said he. "I am gathering honey for little boys and girls to eat. Of course one tiny bee cannot gather very much; but I do what I can and there are thousands and thousands of bees doing just what I am doing, and together we have gathered all of the honey that was ever made."



"You are welcome to all of my sweetness," said the rose.

So the bee gathered the honey and went his way; and the rose was very happy for she knew that she had not bloomed in vain.

THE FLYING LESSON

THIS is a story about a little raccoon who had a very active mind and a rather lazy body. He was not content to run about on the ground and climb trees and bathe in the brooks. He wanted to fly. "Walking is tiresome, and climbing is real work. It must be very restful to go sailing through the air with nothing to do but to move your wings occasionally." He would lie on his back for hours looking up at the sky and watching the birds as they flew by.

One day he saw a real aeroplane sailing along high, high in the air. How beautiful it was and what a thrill Master Raccoon felt as he gazed at it. Then the thought came to him, "If men can fly there is no reason why I should not." He spent a good deal of his time thinking about it and finally an idea came to him. "I know what I will do," said he. "The next time we have chicken for dinner I will ask mother to let me have the wings."

Not long after this the Raccoon family did have chicken. It

was a fine young fowl with a pair of beautiful red wings, and Master Raccoon was so delighted when his mother told him he might have them, that he scarcely ate a bite of dinner. He asked to be excused before the meal was finished and set about fastening the wings on to his back just below the shoulders, with some pieces of string and a belt. He arranged it so that by pulling on the ends of the strings he was able to move the wings up and down like a bird. But when all was ready and he attempted to fly, what was his surprise and disappointment to discover that, try as he would, he could not so much as raise both feet from the ground.

While he was pondering over this and wondering what the trouble was, an old crow came along and lighted on a nearby tree. Master Raccoon was so deep in thought that he did not see old Mr. Crow turn his head away to hide a smile. Mr. Crow was none too friendly with the Raccoon family, and it would have been well for the little raccoon had he remembered this, but he did not; and he took all of the old crow's advice in good faith and without the slightest question of doubt.

"I have been flying for a number of years," said Mr. Crow, "and I know from my own experience that it is a very difficult thing for even an expert flyer to take to the air from the ground.

I almost always alight in the upper branches of some tall tree and then, when I wish to fly, all I have to do is to flap my wings and drop down a little just to get a good start and then — away I soar.”

All of this sounded very reasonable to the young raccoon and he felt perfectly sure that he would have no further trouble if he did as the crow suggested. So he climbed to the very top of a tall tree. It was hard work; for he was not used to climbing with wings and they kept getting in his way; but finally all was ready and he spread the chicken wings out, just as he had seen birds do, and then let go. There was a rustling of feathers and a flapping sound and then a crash, crash, bumpety, bump, as poor Master Raccoon tumbled down, down, down, through the branches of the tree and finally struck the ground with a hard thump — tangled pieces of string — wings — feathers and all — for you know, and I know, and we might have told Master Raccoon, that he would surely come to grief.

Fortunately he was not badly hurt, but he was very much shaken up and it was some time before he managed to gather himself together and untie the wings; for he had no more wish to try to fly.

As he started off for home he heard a “Caw, caw,” that

sounded to him very much like a laugh, and looking up he saw the old crow flap his wings and sail away far up into the sky.

“I think that old crow knew that my wings wouldn't work and was playing a joke on me,” said Master Raccoon indignantly; and I think he was right; don't you?

THE LAZY GRASSHOPPER



THERE were hundreds of beautiful hollyhocks along the garden wall, red, purple, pink, lavender, white, scarlet, yellow, and all of the shades that go between; and when the sun shone on them they seemed to be fairly aflame. Of course the bees found them and they knew that it was the very best place to come for honey. So they gathered all that they could carry and then flew back to their hives and told other bees about the wonderful hollyhock blossoms; and the other bees returned with them to the hollyhock garden for more honey, and so it went on day after day.

The busy little bees buzzed here and there among the blossoms trying first one and then another, just as you do sometimes when you have a whole box of candy all at once. Sometimes a bee going into the heart of a blossom would meet another coming out, and they would almost bump into each other; but then would turn aside just in time and go hurrying on their way.

A lazy old grasshopper sat on a tall blade of grass watching them. All through the long hot day he sat there, deep in thought, and not so much as moving a leg or turning his head. Late in the afternoon, when he was sure that he had given the matter enough thought, he called one of the bees to him. The bee was not at all anxious to stop her work just to listen, for she had planned to make two more trips to her hive before dark; but she did not like to be impolite so she stopped for just a minute.



“I have been watching you silly bees all day,” said the old grasshopper, “and do you know that you waste a great deal of time simply because you have no system? Sometimes as many as twenty of you will go into a single blossom in less than an hour. If you managed rightly, each one of you would be assigned to a separate flower and you would not waste time going to the same blossom.”

The little bee listened patiently until the grasshopper had finished and then she said, “Each one of us gets some honey from every blossom we visit, and it is the correct way to gather honey. As for the amount of work we accomplish, I have made twenty trips to my hive today and have taken all the honey I could carry on each trip and most of my companions have done as well. May I ask how much work you have done?”

I don't know whether or not the old grasshopper made any reply, but I did see him gather his two long legs up so that they looked like V's turned upside down, and then he gave a great hop and the little bee went on about her work.

THE BETTER WAY

LITTLE TEDDY BEAR was very fond of blackberries; and every day during the berry season, he and his mother would take their baskets and go to the blackberry thicket and pick until their baskets were full. Then they would return to their home in a cave under some great rocks and when dinner time came they would each have a nice, heaping dish of berries. But I am sorry to say little Teddy was very greedy and the berries did taste so good that he got into the habit of putting them into his mouth instead of the pail. "They taste so good," he said to himself, "and anyway mother will pick all that we need for dinner."

That was all very well, but of course that sort of thing could not go on for very long without his mother discovering it; and it made her quite sad to think that her little son should be so selfish. So she decided that she would have to teach him a lesson.

One day they went to the berry patch as usual and, as usual,

Teddy ate all the berries he picked. He was so busy doing this that he did not notice what his mother was doing. That night when they sat down to dinner Teddy was much surprised to find that there were no berries in his bowl. "Can it be that my mother is so selfish as to have kept all of the berries for herself?" thought he. But when he looked he discovered that her bowl was empty too.



"Why, mother," said he, "we haven't any berries."

"No," replied his mother. "I did just what you have been doing. All of the berries that I didn't eat, I put into my basket for our dinner."

"But, mama, there aren't any in your basket," said Teddy.


“No?” replied his mother. “Then suppose we have those that are in your basket.”

Of course Teddy could make no reply and he was quite ashamed of himself.

“I know just how you feel,” said his mother. “I felt very greedy too when I ate all of the berries I picked. Don’t you think it is the nicer way to save them and then enjoy them together at dinner?”

“Yes,” said Teddy, “and I am very sorry to think that I have been so selfish.”

GETTING OUT OF A HOLE

 ONE dark night Mr. Frog and his little son went out for a walk, or, I suppose it would be more proper to say for a hop. It was such a very dark night that they could not see the length of one good hop ahead of them, and that was why they chanced to meet with an accident. Young Master Frog happened to be just half a hop ahead of his father when he dropped right into a deep hole. He was not hurt one bit, but the sides of the hole were very steep and he found the work of jumping back out, very difficult. Every time he tried he would slip back just half as far as he had hopped.

With the aid of several friendly fireflies who were passing, they were able to see that the hole was about six feet deep, and at each leap Master Frog would go about one foot and slip back half that distance.

“Cheer up,” said his father, “it will take you just eleven jumps to get out of the hole.”

“I don’t see how you figure that out,” said his son. for he prided himself on being particularly bright at arithmetic.

“Try it and see,” said his father.

So the young frog hopped a foot and slipped back half a foot; and he hopped another foot and slipped back another half a foot, and so on.


“I am gaining just half a foot at each hop,” said he, “and if the hole is six feet deep it will take me just twelve jumps to reach the top.”



But there was one thing that he did not think of. I wonder if you know what it was. The eleventh hop took him to the top of the hole so of course he didn't slip back that time.

“Well,” said he with an embarrassed smile, “I didn't think of that. Anyway, I am glad to have got out of the hole.”

GREAT AND SMALL

 ONE day a long time ago, a tiny mouse was sitting near the door of his home in an old stump when he was attacked by a rat. The rat looked very big and ugly and the poor little mouse was frightened almost to death; but he managed to escape into his hole in the stump.

As the rat turned to walk away he found himself face to face with a mink. The mink had very sharp teeth and he looked anything but friendly; and old Mr. Rat was so frightened that he trembled all over, but he did have presence of mind enough to dart under an old stone wall where the mink could not follow.

The mink was very angry; but a moment later his anger turned to fright for just a few steps away he saw a large raccoon. The raccoon was just about to pounce upon him and it was his good fortune that he happened to be close to the bank of a little stream. He gave two quick bounds and splashed into the water just in time to escape the sharp claws of Mr. Raccoon.



“Mr. Raccoon had no wish
to pick a quarrel with Reynard.”

The raccoon turned in disgust, but he had gone only a little way when he met a fox. The fox and the raccoon are bitter enemies and Mr. Raccoon had no wish to pick a quarrel with Reynard. In fact his only thought was to get away, so he scampered up a tree just as fast as he could go.

“It is lucky for you that I cannot climb,” said the fox. But he had scarcely gotten the words out of his mouth when he heard a sharp snarl behind him, and turning, he was terrified to see that he was being followed by a big timber wolf. Reynard needed no one to tell him that his life was in danger. He darted into the underbrush and it was fortunate for him that he was swift enough to make his escape. The wolf clawed the earth and growled in rage for he did not like to think that so large and powerful a creature as he, could be outdone by a fox.

The breaking of a large bough just ahead of him caused the wolf to look up and what was his fear and surprise to find himself facing a great grizzly bear. Mr. Wolf had no thought then but to get away as quickly as he could, so he turned and fled; and as the old bear was too heavy to run very fast, the wolf managed to save himself.

Then the tiny mouse crept out from his hiding place and walked fearlessly up to the great bear who looked down and smiled

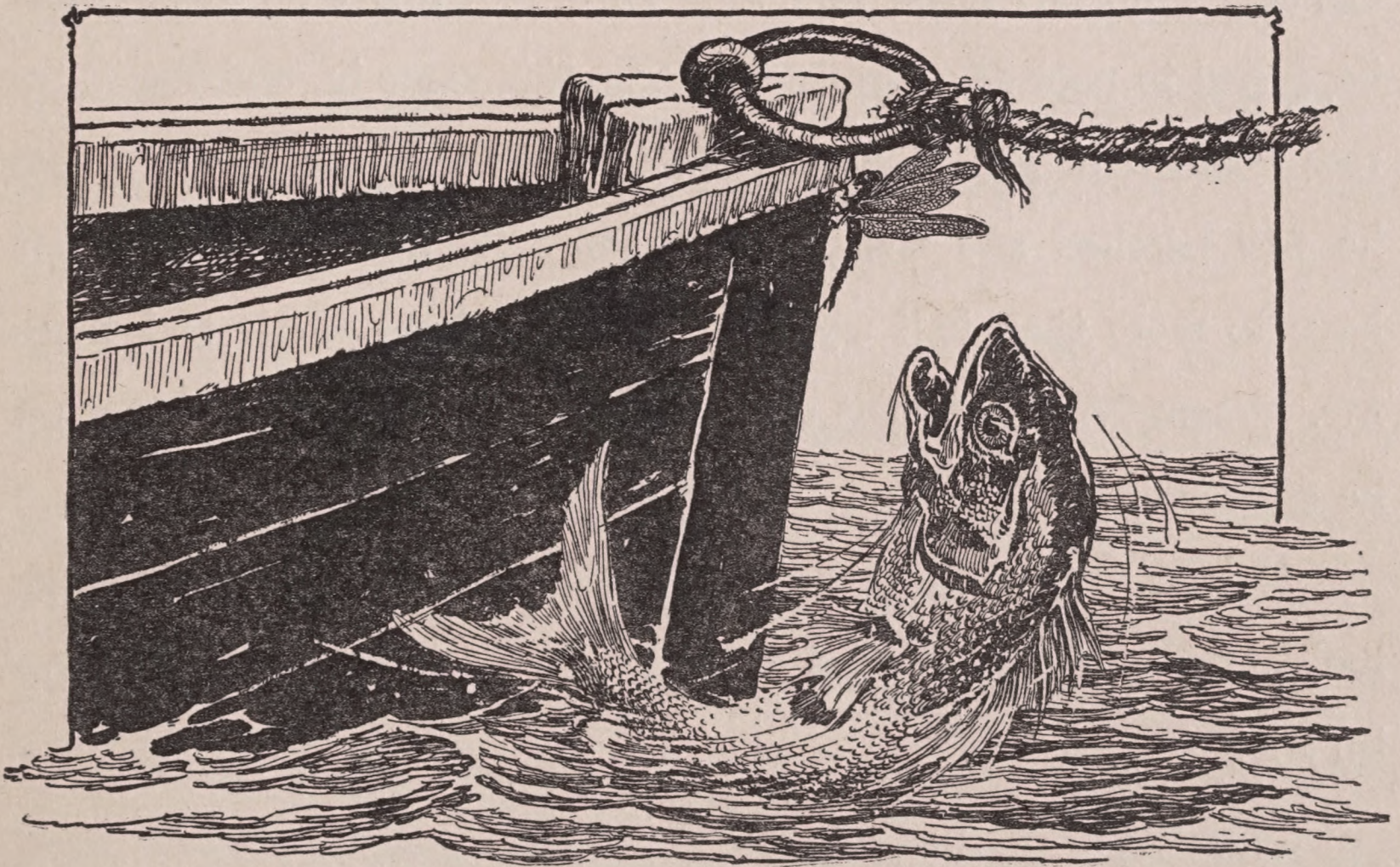


at the little creature and said, "Why is it that you, who were afraid of the rat, who was afraid of the mink, who was afraid of the raccoon, who was afraid of the fox, who was afraid of the wolf, who was so afraid of me; why is it that you are not afraid of me?"

"I don't know," said the little mouse, and he crept very close to the big grizzly. "I don't know, but I suppose it is because you are so very great and I am so very small that it seemed as if you would hardly go to the bother of noticing me; much less of doing me any harm."

THE CARELESS DRAGONFLY

ONE lazy summer's day a gay dragonfly sailed out over the water and alighted on the prow of a boat that was moored to a post. While he was enjoying the sunshine, a fish happened to spy him and thought what a fine dinner he would make. The fish darted out of the water and tried to catch him, but the dragonfly was just high enough to be safely out of reach, and Mr. Fish splashed back into the water again without having got his prey.



Now, the dragonfly was a little bit like some people I know, he loved to tease, and when he discovered that he was safely out of reach of the fish, he made a practice of going every day to the same place to sun himself and take a little nap — and every day the fish would make the same hopeless effort to catch him. This was great sport for the dragonfly — but one day he sailed over the place where the boat had been — to find it gone. “Never mind,” thought he, “that need not put an end to my sport. The post is still here.” So he alighted on the post — taking great care to choose a spot a safe distance above the water.

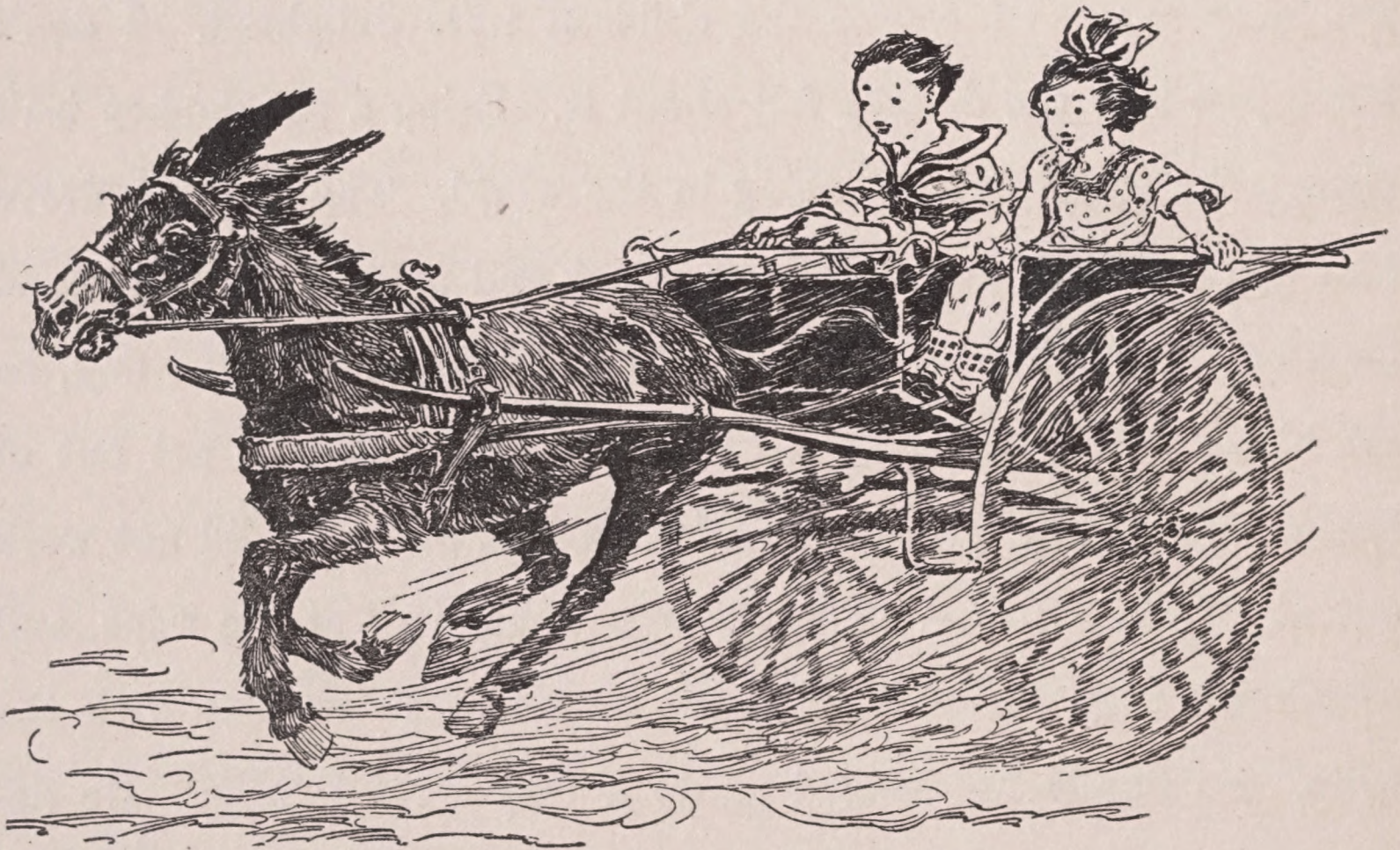
The sun was warm and bright and Mr. Dragonfly soon fell to dozing. I do not know how long he dozed, but I do know what happened to poor Mr. Dragonfly. The tide came in, and the water rose higher and higher, until it was within a few inches of where he was perched and then, along came Mr. Fish, and he didn't have to more than half try, to jump out of the water and catch Mr. Dragonfly in his great open mouth — and that was just what he did.

It is a very good plan for dragonflies and for little children too, to be careful what kind of places they select for their naps — isn't it?

THE RUNAWAY DONKEY

IN A street just around the corner from some place or other lived a little boy and girl. They had a great many toys — not to mention a dog and a cat — and one day their grandfather gave them a real live donkey and the cutest little cart that you ever saw. Of course the children were delighted. I don't know just how the donkey felt about it. Being a pet donkey isn't always the most pleasant thing in the world. The children drove him up the street and down the street and around the block and back again until he became very tired of his lot. So, one day, he set his donkey wits to try to think up some plan to get out of being overworked. At first he tried loafing, but that did not work out at all to his liking. The children would jerk at the reins, and sometimes they would even go so far as to strike him with the whip. So finally he decided to do a very fearful thing. He decided to run away. He had heard of runaways and he had always understood that they were most alarming things. So, when the

children urged him to hurry along and struck him, he started off and ran just as fast as he could go. At first he thought it exciting sport. "I will run fast enough and far enough to give them a real scare," said he — and he ran a little faster if possible. He ran, and he ran, until he was quite out of breath and very tired — and finally he began to think. Then all at once the thought came to him — "Can it be that those naughty children have been so unkind as to let me think I was running away just to keep me going?" And — will you believe it — that was exactly what those roguish youngsters had been doing.



WOODCHUCK LODGE

A PLUMP old woodchuck once decided to make his home on the sunny sloping side of a clover field. He dug a hole about six inches wide, for that is the kind of a home the woodchuck makes. Of course a great deal of dirt had to be dug out to make such a hole, and the woodchuck did not haul the dirt away. He heaped it up in a circular ridge at the very door of his hole. That was the way his father and grandfather and all the other good woodchucks he could remember had made their homes; so surely there must be some good reason for doing it that way.

In a brush heap not very far from Mr. Woodchuck's home, lived two rabbits; and like some other people, they had the very unpleasant habit of finding fault with their neighbors. They made no end of fun of good old Mr. Woodchuck. He was fat and a little bit awkward, and could not get over the ground nearly so fast as they could; and that furnished them a great deal of amusement and gave them much to talk about.

And when they tired of this, they began to criticise the manner

in which his home was built. "It was like living in a damp cellar," they said, "and must be very unhealthy indeed. They much preferred a nice, airy, well-ventilated brush pile. And, if he did have to dig a hole in the ground to live in, why on earth didn't he haul that unsightly mound of earth away from his door. They were the ones who had to look at it; and it certainly was not beautiful."

So they talked, and many of the remarks were made so loud, and in such a way that old Mr. Woodchuck could not help hearing them. But he pretended not to hear, or laughed it off in his cheerful way.

The warm, sunny summer passed and October came with chill autumn rains. My! how hard it rained. The brush pile was a very poor shelter and the two saucy rabbits were soon drenched to their skins.

"This is not so very pleasant," said one of them, after they had stood it about as long as they could.

"Let us go over and pay old Mr. Woodchuck a little visit," said the other. "Perhaps it is dry over there, and he will never suspect that we came to get out of the wet."

That seemed to be a good idea so the two bunnies hopped across the wet field to Mr. Woodchuck's home and told him that they had come for a little visit.

"I am very glad to see you," said good old Mr. Woodchuck


with a sly wink, "but before you come in, let me explain to you just why I left the dirt heaped about the door of my home."

So the wise old fellow kept the two wretched rabbits standing out in the rain while he, with just his nose poked out of the cozy



hole, explained how the bank of earth kept the water that came rushing down the hillside, from running into his hole and drowning him out. It was all very clear to them at a glance, but they had to wait just the same until he had finished telling them about it. Then he welcomed them into his cozy little house where they had a chance to dry their fur, and they talked about a great many things. Do you think they ever again made fun of the way in which he had built his house? It is not always wise to ridicule the way a thing is done simply because you don't understand it.

WISDOM

 ONE sunny day two old geese went for a walk. It was a beautiful day and they went on and on until they had got far beyond the familiar places they knew so well about the poultry yard. Finally they came to a crossroad and they were at a loss to know which way to go to get back home. Now these two foolish old geese were very well satisfied with themselves; but they really knew less than nothing. There was a signboard with a hand that pointed down one way and the words that told where the road led to. And there was another hand that pointed the other way and told where that road went. But as neither of these old geese could read a word the hands did not help them one bit.

“How perfectly silly it is to have the hands point in different directions,” said one. “If instead of having two hands they had just one, and pointed it in the direction of our home, then there could be no chance for doubt and we would have no trouble. Stupid! Stupid!”

While they were pondering over the difficulty an old turtle came waddling along the road.

“Mr. Turtle,” said one of the geese with an air of much greater wisdom than he really possessed, “We haven’t our glasses and cannot read the sign at this distance. Can you tell us which road to take to get back home?”



Now the turtle was able to read the sign for he had some education. But he knew only his own language and so he just smiled and tipped his hat politely and told them that he couldn’t understand them and passed on.

“What a very stupid creature,” exclaimed the geese indig-

nantly. "He can't understand us, and he can't talk so that we can understand him."

Then the two old geese went on their way quite satisfied with their own wisdom, and wondering how anyone else could know so little.

ONE KERNEL OF CORN

THREE LITTLE RATS were playing in an old bushel basket back of the barn one fine spring day, when they happened to spy a kernel of corn wedged in between the wickers at the bottom of the basket. It was not a difficult matter to get it out, but the real trouble arose after this had been done. Which of them was to have the prize? They had all seen it at about the same moment, and they had each had a hand in releasing it from the wickers. The idea of dividing it into three parts seemed altogether too foolish for words, as there is little enough to a kernel of corn, let alone dividing it. None of the three would think of giving up his claim to the whole kernel and the argument was becoming quite serious when Mrs. Rat, who happened to be under a box a short distance away, heard the wrangle and came out to settle it.

“See here, my children,” said she when she had learned the cause of the trouble, “there is not enough to a single kernel for one

of you to worry about, let alone three. What I am about to do may seem very foolish to you now but perhaps later on you will see the wisdom of it." So saying she dug a little hole about an inch deep in the ground close to the old stone wall, placed the kernel in the hole, and covered it up very carefully. The children were not at all well pleased when they saw her do this, and they thought it very unreasonable.

A week passed and the kernel had been quite forgotten. Then one day, little Softpaw, the youngest son, came running quite out of breath to where his mother and the two older brothers were busy gnawing at the roots of an old tree. "Mother! Mother!" said he, "there is a tall green plant growing up out of the very spot where you buried the kernel of corn."

Mrs. Rat smiled, but did not seem so surprised as her son. "Do not disturb it," she said, "we will watch it grow from day to day and perhaps something wonderful will come of it." So every day they went to look at the strange tall plant that had appeared so mysteriously. And each day the plant was noticeably taller, until at the end of a month, it looked to the little rats like a great, green tree with wide, waving branches that hung down like giant spears of grass. And then one day, when it had got so very tall that the poor little rats almost had to break their necks



“What I am about to do
may seem foolish to you now.”

to look up at the top, they discovered that it had branched out into a beautiful tassel.

“How very lovely!” they exclaimed.

“Yes,” said their mother, “it is lovely, but I see something that is even more remarkable.” Then she pointed out to them a large, green swelling that had grown out close to the stalk of the plant just above one of the leaves.

“Let us look for more of them,” said her oldest son. That was a good idea and in a very short time they had discovered that there were four, and that there was a very queer bunch of something that looked like hair sticking out of the end of each.

“Those swellings,” said the good mother, “are called ears. We will wait a few days and see if they get any larger.” So they watched the ears from day to day, and sure enough they did grow longer and fuller until finally each one was as large as one of the rats.

“How fortunate it is that there are four of them, one for each of us,” said the good mother. “They are all done up in beautiful green wrappings and we will not undo them until just before Thanksgiving.”

The three little rats found it very difficult to wait, but there was nothing else to do, so they made the best of it. Then one day

in the autumn, when the long green leaves were beginning to change to a beautiful tan color, Mrs. Rat said, "Tomorrow, if it is a nice day, we will undo our packages."

You may imagine how difficult it was to wait another whole day, but they did; and the next morning the sun rose bright and clear. Mrs. Rat gnawed at the great stalk, just above the ground, until it began to sway back and forth in the breeze and finally fell with a rustle and crash. Then each of the rats ran up and began to tear the wrappers off his bundle. And what do you suppose they found inside of them? Well, they each found a beautiful, long ear of corn, with rows and rows of the loveliest golden kernels you ever saw. "How very wonderful," said the children.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Rat, looking very wise indeed, "and only think that it all came from the one little kernel we buried here last spring."

"I am going to save two of my kernels to plant next year," said little Sharp Claw.

"And so am I," said both of his brothers. And then they all sat down to a feast.

THE LONGEST WAY

THERE was once a silly old gander who had a way of tipping his head and blinking one eye that gave him a look of great wisdom, but in truth he was quite simple; and in this I am sure you will agree with me when you have finished reading this story. One day, while he was foraging about the fields, he happened upon a large grasshopper. "Here is a prize, to be sure," thought the old gander.

But the grasshopper did not care to be made part of Mr. Gander's dinner, and he led him a merry chase far across the fields, hopping this way and that until he finally made his escape under a large stone. By this time poor old Mr. Gander had become so confused in his directions that he could not tell north from south, and he had not the slightest idea which way to turn his steps to return to the poultry yard. So he started off in the direction he supposed to be right and walked and walked.

Finally he met an old crow perched on a stump sunning himself.

"Pardon me," said the old gander, "but I have lost my way.

Can you tell me how far I will have to walk to get to the poultry yard?"

"If you keep right on in the direction you are going," said the crow, "you will have to travel about twenty-five thousand miles."

"Dear! dear!" said the stupid old gander, "who would have



dreamed I had wandered so very far away? But I had better hurry or it will be dark before I get half way back."

So he blinked his eye and cocked his head and started off. He walked and walked what seemed to him a very long way, until he met an owl.

“Mr. Owl,” said he, “I am trying to get to the poultry yard. Can you tell me how much farther I have to go?”

“If you keep on in the direction you are going,” said the wise old owl, “you will have to travel about twenty-five thousand miles. But,” he added, “if you will turn around and go in the opposite direction, a short walk of a half mile will bring you there.”

“Dear! dear!” said the silly old gander, as he turned about and started off, “how strange that this did not occur to me before.”

THE ABSENT-MINDED LITTLE PIG

THIS is a story about a very little pig, but it might just as well have been a little boy or girl. This little pig lived with his mother in a tiny hut way down at one end of the barnyard. One day he asked his mother if he might go over and visit another little pig who lived some distance away in another corner of the farm.

“You may go,” said his mother, “but I think you had better take your raincoat and rubbers, it looks to me very much as though it might rain.” And she cast a knowing eye up at a big black cloud directly overhead

“All right, mother,” said the little pig, and he ran and got them and started off.

Sure enough it did rain, and it kept on raining all the afternoon. “How thankful I am that I had him take his raincoat and rubbers,” said the good mother, as she stood looking at the big drops beating against the window.

Late in the afternoon, just when there was a particularly heavy downpour, the door opened and in walked Master Piggy; but what was his mother's great surprise and dismay to discover that he was carrying his raincoat on his arm and his little rubbers in his hand, and he was drenched to the skin.

"Why, my dear child," said the poor mother as soon as she had recovered from the shock, "didn't I tell you to take your raincoat and your rubbers for this very reason?"

"I did take them," sobbed the poor little pig, "but, mother, I never thought to put them on."







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